Helicopter Losses During the Vietnam War

There were about 12,000 helicopters that served in the Vietnam War (we have specific tail numbers for 11,827 from all services). See below for losses.

Bell Helicopter built 10,005 Hueys from 1957 to 1975. Prior to 1957, there were three XH-40 prototypes and six YH-40 test helicopters manufactured. Of the 10,005 production Hueys, the first 732 were designated HU-1A and HU-1B. 9,216 of these went to the U.S. Army, 79 to the U.S. Air Force, 42 to the U.S. Navy, and 127 to the U.S. Marine Corps. The rest went to other countries.

Our records show that 7,013 Hueys served in the Vietnam War. Almost all were Army.

			KIA	KIA
	served	destroy	pilots	crew
UH-1	80	80	36	17
UH-1A	8	1		
UH-1B	729	376	139	144
UH-1C	696	415	167	158
UH-1D	1,926	1,028	224	247
UH-1E	156	100	39	41
UH-1F	31	18	4	5
UH-1H	3,375	1,285	457	487
UH-1L	2			
UH-1M	5		5	3
UH-1N	2	2		
UH-1P	3		3	1
	7,013	3,305	1,074	1,103

Total helicopter pilots killed in the Vietnam War was 2,202. Total non-pilot crew members was 2704. Based on a database I got recently from the Pentagon, we estimate that over 40,000 helicopter pilots served in the Vietnam War.

To help in understanding the above numbers, the first 80 Hueys are missing a letter for some unknown reason. UH-1Ds were upgraded to UH-1Hs. That is why you see a higher percent of losses for UH-1Ds. They were destroyed before they were upgraded to Hs. They were both used as slicks so they should be counted together when making any conclusions. UH-1Bs were upgraded to UH-1Cs then to UH-1Ms. Most of the UH-1Bs and nearly all of the UH-1Cs were used as gunships. The UH-1E, F, L, N and P were typically non-Army.

2,709 people were killed while in Hueys.

1,074 pilots

1,103 crew members

532 American passengers (we do not have a good count on Vietnamese, their numbers probably exceed the number of American passengers)

2,709

Army UH-1's totaled 7,531,955 flight hours in the Vietnam War between October 1966 and the end of 1975. It is my opinion that the Huey including the Huey Cobra (AH-1G) which had 1,038,969 flight hours in Vietnam, have more combat flight time than any other aircraft in the history of warfare.

Here is a web site of mine with more information http://www.vhfcn.org/stat.htm

All of the Army's Vietnam era helicopters had Indian names except for the Cobra. The UH-1 was officially

designated the Iroquois. It was the first turbine power aircraft purchased by the Army and had the largest numbers produced of any helicopter for that era (this may still be true). It started out as the civilian model 204 and was designated XH-40 when the first three prototypes were ordered. The first of these was flown by Floyd Carlson at Fort Worth on 22 October 1956. Before this first flight, a service test batch of six YH-40s had been ordered and these were delivered by August 1958. When the H-40 was ordered into production, it was redesignated HU-1A in the Army category for utility helicopters and officially named the Iroquois. The HU designation gave rise to the "Huey" nickname for the type. The first of nine pre-production HU-1As were made on June 30, 1959. In 1962, the Iroquois became the H-1 in the new tri-service designation system which changed the HU-1A and HU-1B to UH-1A and UH-1B.

The following was done recently for a museum.

```
1
        205
                was destroyed (Air America)
270
       AH-1G were destroyed
1
       AH-1J was destroyed
       BELL
               was destroyed
1
14
       CH-21C were destroyed
2
       CH-34 were destroyed
       CH-37B was destroyed
1
1
       CH-37C was destroyed
7
       CH-3C were destroyed
7
       CH-3E were destroyed
94
       CH-46A were destroyed
58
       CH-46D were destroyed
83
       CH-47A were destroyed
20
       CH-47B were destroyed
29
       CH-47C were destroyed
12
       CH-53A were destroyed
2
       CH-53C were destroyed
9
       CH-53D were destroyed
9
       CH-54A were destroyed
2
       H-37A were destroyed
21
       HH-3E were destroyed
7
       HH-43B were destroyed
       HH-43F were destroyed
6
2
       HH-53B were destroyed
7
       HH-53C were destroyed
147
       OH-13S were destroyed
93
       OH-23G were destroyed
45
       OH-58A were destroyed
842
       OH-6A were destroyed
3
       SH-34G were destroyed
8
       SH-3A were destroyed
3
       SIOUX were destroyed
60
       UH-1
               were destroyed
        UH-1A was destroyed
1
357
       UH-1B were destroyed
       UH-1C were destroyed
365
886
       UH-1D were destroyed
90
       UH-1E were destroyed
18
       UH-1F were destroyed
       UH-1H were destroyed
1313
1
       UH-1N was destroyed
       UH-2A were destroyed
6
       UH-2B were destroyed
6
```

UH-34D were destroyed

176

Total helicopters destroyed in the Vietnam War was 5,086 out of 11,827

Please note: These numbers were compiled at different times with different conditions; therefore, there are some discrepancies between the two sets.

Information compiled by **Gary Roush**

Return to VHPA Home Page